

Land declared as forest land

***350. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR:** Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the percentage of land declared to be forest land in each State and Union Territory;

(b) the percentage of forest land not actually under green-cover;

(c) whether the green-cover is increasing or decreasing during the last five years; and

(d) whether the forest-dwellers would be entitled to the land they are occupying for generation after generation?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI A. RAJA):

(a) The percentage of land declared as forest land in each State and Union Territory (UT) compiled by Forest Survey of India (FSI) from the information obtained from the respective State/Union Territory Forest Departments is given in Statement—I. (See below).

(b) Forest cover or green cover is assessed by image processing of digital satellite data at a scale of 1:50,000. The minimum area of green cover which can be delineated by assessing digital satellite data is 1 ha. with a canopy density of 10% and above, irrespective of the legal status of land. The assessment of forest land not actually under green cover is not specified in State of Forest Report, 2003 published by FSI as many forest areas are not demarcated on the ground;

(c) The green cover comprising forest and tree cover is increasing as per the last three forest and tree cover assessments done by Forest Survey of India. The details as per State of Forest Reports are given in Statement-II. (See below).

(d) A Bill in this regard, titled "Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forest Rights) Bill 2005" was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 13.12.2005 by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. The Cabinet in its meeting held on 7.12.2006 has given certain directions and the Ministry of Tribal Affairs is taking further action to finalize the Bill as per the established procedure.

Statement-II(Area in Km²)

State/UT	Geographical Area	Recorded Forest Area	Percentage
1	2	3	4
Andhra Pradesh	275,069	63,821	23.20
Arunachal Pradesh	83,743	51,540	61.55
Assam	78,438	27,018	34.45
Bihar	94,163	6,473	6.87
Chhattisgarh	135,191	59,772	44.21
Delhi	1,483	85	5.73
Goa	3,702	1,224	33.06
Gujarat	196,022	19,113	9.75
Haryana	44,212	1,558	3.52
Himachal Pradesh	55,673	37,033	66.52
Jammu and Kashmir	222,236	20,230	9.10
Jharkhand	79,714	23,605	29.61
Karnataka	191,791	43,084	22.46
Kerala	38,863	11,268	28.99
Madhya Pradesh	308,245	95,221	30.89
Maharashtra	307,713	61,939	20.13
Manipur	22,327	17,418	78.01
Meghalaya	22,429	9,496	42.34
Mizoram	21,081	16,717	79.30
Nagaland	16,579	8,629	52.05
Orissa	155,707	58,136	37.34
Punjab	50,362	3,084	6.12
Rajasthan	342,239	32,488	9.49

1	2	3	4
Sikkim	7,096	5,841	82.31
Tamil Nadu	130,058	22,877	17.59
Tripura	10,486	6,293	60.01
Uttar Pradesh	240,928	16,826	6.98
Uttaranchal	53,483	34,662	64.81
West Bengal	88,752	11,879	13.38
Andaman and Nicobar	8,249	7,171	86.93
Chandigarh	114	34	29.82
Dadra and Nagar Haveli	491	204	41.55
Daman and Diu	112	1	0.89
Lakshadweep	32	0	0.00
Pondicherry	480	0	0.00
TOTAL:	3,287,263	774,740	23.57

NOTE:-The forest cover in Lakshdweep and Pondicherry is 23 Km² and 40 Km² respectively. However, this has not been identified under the category "Recorded Forest Area".

Statement-II

Forest and tree cover of India

(Area in Km²)

1999		2001			2003	
Forest Cover*	Forest Cover	Tree Cover**	Forest & Tree Cover	Forest Cover	Tree Cover**	Forest & Tree Cover
637,293	675,538	81,472	757,009	678,333	99,896	778,229

*FSI has been assessing forest cover by interpretation of satellite data since 1987 and publishing results in the form of maps and area figures biennially as 'State of Forest Report'.

**Since 2001, FSI has also been assessing tree cover (tree patches with extent less than one hectare and outside recorded forests).